
Subject: Nutrition Education Overview

Effective Date: October 1, 2005

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The primary goal of the WIC Program is to provide quality preventive nutrition services that improve health outcomes in a cost-effective manner. This goal is accomplished through the three core services - nutrition education, nutritious supplemental foods and referrals to other health care and social service programs. **(Refer to CRT 08.02.00 Medical and Social Program Referrals)**

Nutrition education is a valuable benefit of the WIC Program and begins during the initial certification. Clinics must make nutrition education available to all clients and the parents/guardians of infant and child clients at no cost. Nutrition education must be presented in a way that is easily understood by clients and has practical relevance to the client's nutritional needs, risk factors, household situation, and cultural preferences.

Nutrition education should be coordinated and integrated with other clinic services whenever possible. Nutrition education must be designed to meet the two basic goals of teaching clients the relationship between proper nutrition and good health and assisting participants in making positive changes in their food habits and physical activity.

Reference: CFR §246.11

Nutrition Education embraces the following principles to ensure effectiveness and quality:

- **Interactive** – Involve some type of meaningful interaction and exchange with the family. Nutrition education involves families in self-assessment and self-directed goal setting and helps families move towards their desired level of wellness.
- **Flexible** – Uses multiple strategies and techniques to effectively reach and impact clients and their family.
- **Relevant** – Imparts appropriate and relevant education that is valued by the family. It offers education to clients in an easily understood, fun, interactive manner through developmentally and culturally appropriate teaching aids.
- **Supportive Environment** – Offers education in a family friendly environment for optimal learning. Staff support the family's needs and forms partnerships with families to promote good health.
- **Trained Staff** – Education is facilitated or taught by qualified, well-trained and equipped staff (See Glossary for definition of a CPA).
- **Culturally Supportive** – Acknowledges and supports differences in cultures and languages and is sensitive to cultural food choices, when possible.

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- Targeted Concept – Covers a few relevant messages and issues that are related to their nutritional risk and important to clients and their family.
- Community Based – Allows staff to connect, build and nurture relationships with other community entities to integrate and normalize good health practices into the lives of families.